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A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

THE DEDICATION

OF THE

UNIVERSALIST MEETING HOUSE,

IN DEDHAM, MASS.

7551.339

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 1830.

BY THOMAS WHITTEMORE,
Pastor of the First Universalist Society in Cambridge, Mass.

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CUTTER

ESTATE OF ABRAM E. CUTTER,
AUG. 10, 1907.

7551.339

SERMON.

EZRA V. 11.

"WE ARE THE SERVANTS OF THE GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, AND BUILD THE HOUSE THAT WAS BUILDED THESE MANY YEARS AGO."

This was the answer, returned by the Jews who were building the temple at Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, to those who endeavored to hinder the undertaking. To punish the children of Israel for their disobedience, the King of Kings saw fit that they should be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and carried away captive. After the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, he issued a decree, calling on the people of God to go up to Jerusalem, and build the house of the Lord. The chief of the Jews repaired to Jerusalem, and commenced the work; but being hindered by the intercession of the Samaritans, it was suspended for a short season. But in the second year of the reign of Darius, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, with the Jewish prophets, attempted to build the temple. Their jealous neighbors again interfered, and inquired of them who they were, and who had commanded them to build that house to the Lord? They replied, as in the words of the text, "*We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago.*" Darius permitted the Jews to take the holy vessels of gold and silver, which Nebuchadnezzar had plundered from the former temple, and carried away

with him to Babylon, and to bring them again to the temple in Jerusalem, every one to his place, in the house of God. The worship of the Most High was again set up; and the people showed a suitable zeal, in bringing themselves to an acquaintance with the ancient religion of their fathers.

But how, it may be asked, can it in truth be said, that they "builded the house that was builded many years" before? Had not the first temple been totally destroyed? Had not its scattered fragments mingled in common ruin? In what sense, then, did they build the house that had been builded many years before, by a great King of Israel? The same material edifice they did not rear. They brought cedar trees from Lebanon to adorn and strengthen the new temple. It was the house that had been builded many years before, inasmuch as it was emphatically—the temple of the Lord. It was to occupy the place of the former; it was to be reared for the same objects; and it was to answer the same purposes to this generation of the Jews, that the former had to their fathers. The holy vessels were to be reinstated, and the presence of the Lord of Hosts was to fill the place with glory. When finished, it might with propriety have been said, the temple is reared again.

In making an application of the subject to the occasion on which we are assembled, I design to show, that Universalists, as a denomination, are "*building up a cause which was builded these many years ago*"; or, in other words, that the sentiments they endeavor to spread, are the same which Jesus Christ endeavored to spread, and that these sentiments produce the same effects on the community, and call up the same objections, that were visibly the consequences of the preaching of the Son of God, and his faithful apostles. When we erect Meeting-houses, ordain ministers, and use other efforts to advance the cause we have espoused, the question *cui bono* is start-

ed. What possible good, it is asked, can come of these exertions? Have we not sects enough already? Can it be for any other reason than to gratify a mere feeling of sectarism, that you rend parishes asunder, and shake the ancient order of things? Now we are disposed to give these questions a candid answer. We believe that "we build the house that was builded these many years ago." We believe that the sentiments we inculcate are the same sentiments that were inculcated by Jesus Christ; and we take courage when we perceive, that our efforts have a similar effect upon the community, and draw out the same objections from the mouths of our opponents. We believe that there is a resemblance in the manner in which we combat the vices of the age, and the practice of Jesus Christ in this respect; and we have, in a small degree, produced effects similar to those produced by him, in reforming the principles and practices of the age. Now we appeal to our religious opponents, whether, believing this, we ought not to do all in our power to aid the cause we have espoused; and so far from relaxing our endeavors, whether we ought not to redouble them, and urge forward the work we have undertaken with renewed diligence. Having thus stated the use which I shall make of the text, I proceed to show that there is a striking resemblance between the labors we perform, and those performed by the Lord Jesus and his apostles.

I. *The enemies of Christ, who were at the same time enemies to each other, became professed friends, that they might arrest the progress of his religion.* Hence Luke says, "*And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.*" Luke xxiii. 12. These two eminent men had been engaged in contention for a long time; but they found it necessary to lay aside for a while their enmity, and unite their influence to put down and destroy the blessed Jesus, the meek and lowly Son of God. There certainly may be found something parallel

to this, in the history of the present age. Congregationalists, and Baptists, and Methodists, will all unite to overthrow the blessed doctrine of divine love. However strongly they had before opposed each other, they now have a common object of hate and opposition. In some cases this ostensible profession of friendship and union of exertion, eventuate in a hearty reconciliation between these contending parties. This is one of the benefits which Universalism has conferred on the community, it is one of the good things which have come out of Nazareth. Friends who had been separated from each other for many years, have, by these means, been reconciled, and a real and lasting friendship has ensued.

II. *The enemies of Christ were inspirited in their own cause by the success which attended his labors.* The lethargic Sadducee was aroused, and the zeal of the Pharisee was doubled. Precisely the same effect has been produced by the spread of Universalism. Dormant societies have been roused up, and the dead have been quickened. Go into a town where the preaching of universal grace has never disturbed the uninterrupted sameness of half a century. The minister performs, with dull monotony, his regular round of services, with which every hearer is so well acquainted, that the repetition serves only to lull him more profoundly into his stupor. One half the parish never think of attending worship at all, and the rest go more from habit than any zeal in the service. Let the new preacher of universal grace appear, and appoint a meeting in the neighborhood, and what a shaking among the dry bones! The aged preacher puts on the activity of youth; the deserted house is again crowded, and the dead members of the parish are revived. In these cases, although many attend on the meeting of the new preacher, yet the old congregation is larger than usual, and perhaps twice as many people now attend meeting in the town as ever did before. Our clerical opponents may

thank us for waking up some of their people, who had slept under their preaching almost until the sleep of death overpowered them.

III. *The religion of Christ was a religion for the "common people"—for "sinners";* and it is certainly thrown out as a reproach against Universalism, that this is the only class of people it is fit for. Mark says, concerning Jesus, "and the *common people* heard him gladly." xii. 37. Luke testifies (xv. 1,) that "all the publicans and sinners drew near unto him for to hear him." To such an extent did these things prevail, that the Saviour was contemptuously called, "the friend of publicans and sinners." This charge Jesus never denied. He never said, Scribes and Pharisees, I am calumniated. Bear me witness that I am not a friend of sinners. No. He acknowledged it, and defended the propriety of his conduct. "The whole need not a physician," said he, "but they who are sick." And then he made the application of the figure. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." As though he had said, the kind physician is a friend to the sick, he seeks them, and becomes their companion. I am a friend to sinners. I came to seek and to save them. I am their companion, that I may instruct, guide and comfort them. Sinners delighted in his doctrine; it met and satisfied their wants. This circumstance drew them to him, and gave them a peculiar interest in his ministrations. They rejoiced to find their cause espoused in their low estate, and their interest in the divine benevolence asserted. I appeal to the intelligence of this congregation, whether precisely the same objection is not now made to the doctrine of universal love. The rich, the proud, the self-righteous, do not like Universalism. It is too equalizing a principle. It does not meet their wants, since they desire now and forever to fare better than others; and I know not but they really think they ought. They enforce their claim on the score of justice, as well as propriety,

and affirm, with the utmost positiveness, that God will be, in the highest degree, unjust, if all men are made equally happy. Whether these objections to Universalism spring from that spirit which leads a man to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," I will leave you to determine.

Universalism is emphatically a religion for the "*common people*"—for "sinners." We are not ashamed to own it; it is our glory; it furnishes one evidence at least that that doctrine is of divine origin. I do not hesitate to say, there is no other doctrine whatsoever that meets the wants of that class. Calvinism is founded on caprice. If a man believing that scheme thinks his salvation is decreed, he feels glad to besure, as a person does who has drawn a prize in a lottery, but he sees no cause of gratitude. Arminianism turns the sinner upon himself to seek salvation, and is a constant source of inquietude and alarm. It does not meet the wants of sinners. Nor is there any system that will or can, save that which shows man his everlasting welfare secured in the divine purpose. That doctrine which predicates a man's future condition upon his character in this life, and flatters the vain heart that the petty distinctions which obtain on earth shall be forever perpetuated, will please all who have a great conceit of themselves; but it is not a doctrine for the common people. How different is it from that theology which may be rationally inferred from the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. When we see such striking resemblances between the doctrine we preach and that which Jesus preached, we do not hesitate to say, that we "build the house that was builded these many years ago."

IV. *Jesus Christ exposed a particular class of vices*, which it is the labor, and I might almost say the peculiar labor, of Universalists to expose. A proselytizing spirit, manifested in missionary enterprizes, he reproved when he said, "Wo unto you, Scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." And what

was he, after they had converted him? Answer. "Twofold more the child of hell than themselves." I suppose from this they converted him with hell, since men generally resemble the principles with which you convert them. Jesus reproved those who possessed a desire to keep men out of heaven. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer those who are entering to go in." All ostentation in religion, the blessed Jesus most severely reproved. The hypocrites disfigured their faces, that they might appear unto men to fast—they prayed at the corners of the streets, that they might be heard of men. Against engaging in these duties from such a motive, Jesus most affectionately and earnestly warned his followers. He put them on their guard against *hypocrisy*, as the most deadly bane of the christian character. "You make clean the *outside* of the cup and of the platter," said he to the Pharisees, "but within they are full of extortion and excess. Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness." Perhaps there was no vice against which Jesus said so much as he said against hypocrisy; indeed he seems to have said more against this vice than against all others together. Sincerity was with him the pearl of great price. Without it every thing was worthless in his estimation. Prayer, tythes, alms-giving, fasting, unaccompanied by sincerity, became vices in his sight. He cried aloud against them.

Now are not these the vices against which Universalists are the most forward in opposition? I believe, my friends, that the enmity which has raged against us, we have drawn down upon ourselves, and have ourselves to blame, or rather to praise, for it. It is because we have opposed missionary proceedings, and that cruel disposition which leads some to say, "if all men are going

to heaven, I do not wish to go," that we ourselves are the subjects of opposition. It is because we have opposed ostentation and hypocrisy. These are the peculiar vices of saints, and they stamp a character upon what is now passing in the world for religion. If we would assert the eternal misery of the wicked, the saints would find no fault; but the moment we intimate that *they* err, it is immediately said that we love to find fault, and that we ridicule religion. We are often asked, why we do not patronize the prevailing institutions, such as missionary societies, education societies, tract societies, temperance societies, &c. We answer, we have other work to do. But do you not wish to have intemperance cease? We certainly do, and there are a great many other bad things we should like to have cease. We refer to the vices we have named. I suppose that nineteen out of twenty of the clergy, neglect to warn the public sufficiently in regard to them. And I appeal again to you, whether, as almost all others seem to be deeply engaged in something else, it is not well to have one denomination whose duty it shall be to expose the vices of the saints. In doing this, we follow a high and holy example, and build the cause "that was builded these many years ago." I hope I may say it without egotism, but I must declare, that I think Universalists exercise no little influence in restraining hypocrisy. Let one of this class go into a conference meeting, where people are wont to say what they are never wont to mean, viz. that they are the chief of sinners, and do every thing they ought not, and how quickly does he throw a damp over the whole assembly. No one speaks freely—they are all suspicious of themselves, and they are sometimes so fearful they shall betray their insincerity that they say nothing. I look on it as no small good to make people ashamed of their folly. This is the first step toward weaning them from it.

V. *We pursue the same labor Jesus pursued, in the inculcation of moral duties.* He directed men to love God with all the heart—to love their neighbors as themselves, and to love even their enemies. But there was no duty on which he insisted so earnestly, as that of a love to enemies. In order to enforce it, he referred to the divine example, and exhorted men to resemble their Father in Heaven. I hope this fact will be duly considered, that in order to induce men to love their enemies, to bless those who cursed them, and to pray for those who despitefully used and persecuted them, Jesus referred to the conduct of God to his creatures, and urged them to the performance of these duties, that they might resemble their Father in heaven. To return love for love was, as Jesus showed them, but a common place act of justice between man and man. He wished them to be governed by higher motives, and to love those even who hated them. To find an example by which to enforce this duty, he turned away from man, and sought it in the divine character. And he appealed to the people that this was no vain theory, but that God did actually love his enemies. For, said he, "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "He is kind to the evil and the unthankful." Matt. v. 43—48. Luke vi. 35.

My hearers, this doctrine was taught "these many years ago." Of all the denominations of christians at the present day, who teaches such a doctrine now? Is it not common to hear God represented as burning with wrath against sinners, to whom he cannot be reconciled, and whom he cannot love, while they are in a state of nature? Do those who teach such doctrines "build the house that was builded these many years ago"? Are they "the servants of the God of heaven and earth"? We must answer no. How would they succeed, when enforcing the love of enemies, if they ever attempt that duty, to refer men to the character of God as they have

represented it? Does God, in their view, love his enemies? No. Then the divine example, so far as it had any influence, would have a counteracting influence, and lead men to disobey the commandments of Jesus Christ.

We are sometimes told, (though I can hardly think with seriousness) that Universalism debases the character of God. Some people cling most tenaciously to their views of divine justice, because, as they apprehend, they exalt the divine character. There is nothing that so completely debases it. Jesus taught, as I have already stated, that to love in return for love, was but a common place act of justice, and that publicans and sinners were well known to govern their conduct by that rule. He wished to raise the standard of their morality, and make them truly Godlike, by learning them to return love for hatred, and good for evil. It is Universalism that exalts the character of God, and it is one of its singular offices, to present us with a God whose conduct we may safely imitate. All views of divine justice, inconsistent with a love of sinners, are unworthy of God, and should be entirely discarded.

But I shall be told, that the doctrine for which I here contend, is licentious—that it will not do to preach it, however correct in theory, on account of its bad influences. This is the old objection to Universalism. When driven from every position, the opponent hopes here to find solid ground on which to make a stand, and he affirms most positively that this doctrine has a bad tendency. Why, then, we ask, did Jesus Christ preach it? And is it not singular, that at the very moment when he was enforcing the highest moral duties, he should bring forward this doctrine, which the opponent thinks so evil in its influence, and exhort people to be perfect, as their Father in heaven is perfect? We regard this an entire refutation of the charge of licentiousness.

VI. With respect to *doctrines*, we "build the house that was builded these many years ago." The doctrine of Christ may be exhibited under four divisions. Firstly, he taught that God was the Father of men. He bade us address God as our Father in heaven; and when speaking to a promiscuous multitude, he taught them that they were "all brethren." Second, the love of God to mankind. Third, the death of Christ as a commendation of the love of God. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Here two facts are taught, viz. that God loves the world, and that, in consequence of that great love, he sent his son to save us. Fourth, he taught the ultimate reconciliation of all things to God. "The Father loveth the son, and hath given all things into his hands." "All that the Father hath given me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (1) I need make but few remarks, I presume, to show that this is the doctrine we teach. We attach great importance to the doctrine of God's paternal character and love. This love we believe is unpurchased and unchangeable. It existed originally in God, and never was produced by any circumstance whatsoever. Hence we regard the death of Christ, as a commendation of that love, and its brightest display. We say, with the apostle, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins."

How different the doctrines which have generally prevailed in the church! How few have linked man so closely to the Deity, and bound his eternal welfare so strongly to the throne of God by the indissoluble chain of his love! How contradictory to the doctrine of Jesus is the common doctrine of atonement. According to this theory, to speak plainly, God hated man, and had resolv-

ed on his destruction, from which nothing prevented him but the intercession of Christ, who quenched the flaming sword of divine wrath, in his own vital blood. To speak of the love of God in connexion with this theory, is an abuse of terms ; to speak of the immutability of God, is still worse ; but to speak of his holiness and benevolence, is ridiculous. If this doctrine were true, God would be neither immutable, holy nor benevolent, since he would be capable of change, hatred and cruelty. Jesus taught no such doctrine. He gave all the glory of his mission to the Father. God sent his son ; and I know not why men may not say with equal propriety, that the Holy Ghost died to make Jesus merciful, as that Jesus died to make the Father merciful. If it be said it was necessary for Jesus to die in order to satisfy divine justice, and open a way whereby the sinner may be saved, I reply, that that must be a very capricious kind of justice which is capable of being satisfied by such means. It is totally unlike what we call justice here on the earth ; and I would therefore, suggest the propriety of giving it some other name. Permit me to ask, if the justice of Jesus Christ is the same kind of justice that the Father possesses, why it was not necessary for some victim to die to open a way whereby he might be merciful, especially since it is said that he is the very God ? If Jesus Christ could be merciful without an expiatory sacrifice, and God the Father could not, let us say no more of the supreme goodness of the latter, but render to the son the glory due unto his name ; that of alone possessing sufficient goodness to undertake the work of man's redemption. It is needless, however, to say more on this subject. I am satisfied that Jesus Christ taught no such doctrine as that against which I have spoken. I am satisfied that he asserted the original and unpurchased goodness of God. In maintaining, therefore, the parental character of God, the death of Jesus as a gift of divine love, and the consequent recon-

ciliation of all things to the Father, we "build the house that was builded these many years ago."

Finally. A like blessing crowns our efforts. I repeat it. The blessing which crowns our efforts, is like that which crowned the efforts of Jesus and his apostles. He made a vast alteration in the opinions of mankind. He assaulted the errors of the Jews, errors venerable for their antiquity, and successfully exhorted men to renounce them. The false interpretations which they had given of the word of God, he detected and pointed out. They had been favored above every other nation, having received the oracles of God. But these they corrupted by their traditions. Hence Jesus said unto them, "why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" "Thus have ye made the commandments of God of none effect by your traditions." "In vain do they worship me," continued the Saviour, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." By such means the faith of the nation became corrupt, the scriptures were misapplied to support the false doctrines commonly received, and the authority of God was adduced to give support to opinions generated by the wisdom that is from beneath. The pure truths of heaven, like the holy vessels of the temple, were lost by the influence which the heathen exercised over the Jews. And what was the condition of the heathen at that time? They walked in the valley of the shadow of death. They were "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." The situation of the world has since been very similar. The commandments of God have been made of none effect by the traditions of men. They have taught these traditions for doctrines, and perverted the sacred scriptures to support them. It is by this means that so many parts of the Bible have been misconstrued. Thousands are utter strangers to the cov-

enant of promise, who have no hope; and although they have a God, they are in this respect worse off than the heathen, since they have a God worse than none.

Jesus assaulted the prevailing errors. No love of kindred, no fear what man could do unto him, hindered him from going forward in the work of reformation. His success was commensurate to his endeavors. That religion which was supported by the rich and great, and interwoven with all the interests of the state, trembled on its base. What has been the effects of the labors of Universalists upon the community? Any one who will examine the matter carefully, will, I think, find a much wider effect than he would at first anticipate. It is about half a century since this denomination took its rise in America, which now numbers five hundred societies, and half as many preachers. The state of religion at that time was deplorable. We may truly say, in the striking language of the prophet, the people walked in darkness, and dwelt in the land of the shadow of death. The awful doctrine of absolute reprobation to endless woe, prevailed to a great extent. Hell, it was thought, was a place of material and eternal fire. The damned saw no gleam of hope. In their minds, with the thought of eternity, that of woe was always associated. This was the common doctrine. Infants, it was believed, were to be eternally damned, unless they had been born of believing parents, and had received the rite of baptism. In regard to the numerical proportion between the saved and lost, the former fell far, very far, short of the latter. To believe that one in a hundred would be saved, was very liberal. What must have been the sensations that such doctrines excited in the minds of the people? Religion was peculiarly a subject of gloom. To go to the Meeting-house called up such feelings as it would for a congregation to assemble in a tomb, and listen to the communications of a ghost, the belief in which was then very prevalent. In

calculating the chances of salvation, people saw little ground for hope; and with hell they associated every thing that was dreadful.

> "Eternal plagues and heavy chains,
> Tormenting racks and fiery coals;
> And darts t' inflict immortal pains,
> Dip't in the blood of damned souls."

The feelings of parents at the loss of their children, I will not attempt to describe. The scalding tears of the mother, the audible bursting forth of grief, the wringing of the hands, and the beating of the breast, are too much for my feelings as well as my pen. The death of the child had been sufferable but for the belief that it was tossing on the billows of eternal fire.

Now it is not so. How great the happy change! Bring the beginning and the end of the last half century into contact, and see the wonderful difference. Where can you find a preacher who declares boldly the doctrine of absolute reprobation to endless woe. Indeed the orthodox say they are slandered, if they are accused of believing it. Compared with what it formerly was, hell is now a mild and tolerable place, if indeed it be a place at all, which is very much doubted at the present time by the orthodox themselves. No burning brimstone, no material fire, but a 'hell of conscience,' as it is called, is the *ne plus ultra* of future punishment. All infants, it is asserted, will be saved. And the numerical proportion between the saved and the lost, is now completely reversed; the number of the saved compared with the number of the damned being the same that the number of the damned compared with the number of the saved used to be. An eminent divine compares the sinners in hell to the convicts in the state's prison, and makes them bear the same proportion to the whole human family that the latter do to the whole community; and one of the Andover Professors asserts, that the number of the damned, compared with the whole, will be no greater than those who are ex-

ecuted in the country are to the whole population. This is a very near approach to Universal Salvation. It is not now uncommon to hear ministers assert endless misery in any form with much doubt. They hesitate—they prefer rather to use the more modern and vague terms, 'future retribution'—'the retributions of another world'—'the retributions of eternity.' These improvements have been introduced gradually. The tide has rolled slowly, but with irresistible power. Our religious leaders sometimes get alarmed, and think they must do something to stop the course of things. They get up a revival of religion, as they miscall their excitements, and try to carry people back a little. As well might a man attempt to arrest the current of the Mississippi. And supposing that he was enabled to do it for a short time, the current would cease but to accumulate strength; and when it broke the frail barrier, it would rush with overwhelming force to bear every thing away.

The change in public feeling has been as great as the change in public sentiment. Religion is now a matter of cheerfulness and joy. Man, accustomed to regard his maker as his parent and friend, finds his heart dilated with gratitude, and pants for a closer communion. He says, "how amiable are thy tabernables, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

My friends, to what sect will you give credit for the vast change? The orthodox will not thank you to credit them for it, for it has kept them filing off the rough edges of their creeds till but little of the original is left. Will you give it to the Unitarians? To them it does not belong. They have been pleading continually that we go too fast, although they have always hurried along as fast

as they dared in order to keep pace with the improvement of the age. They, too, very seldom discuss doctrinal topics in their preaching; and those topics they have discussed, have had no direct bearing on those points concerning which the happiest change has been effected. The credit of the change must be given to those who have been enabled by the divine blessing openly to assault prevailing errors, who have stood in the front rank, and met the enemy face to face: those who have neither been afraid nor ashamed of truth: who have borne shame and suffering for the truth's sake. I ask it not for myself, nor for any of my brethren as young as I. I claim it for such men as Murray, Winchester, the departed Streeters, Richards, and I might add the names of some who yet remain. It has been the preaching and labors of such men, aided by divine wisdom, that have brought eternal punishment and other kindred errors into so great disrepute.

A change equally great has been effected in the manner of explaining the scriptures. Formerly almost every passage in which punishment was spoken of, was applied to a future state of punishment. The figurative expressions of the prophets, and all the parables of the New Testament that could be twisted in their application to refer to a judgment or punishment in the future world, were thus applied. Now how wide is the difference. There is a very general impression that the Old Testament does not reveal to us a future state at all. And of all the passages in the New Testament formerly applied to a future state of punishment, how few are there on which you can get all the orthodox to agree in thus continuing to apply them. There are a few, to besure, that they mean to retain in that service, and but a few. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew is now on the pivot, and is just about to go round, by the consent of all parties, to the true and proper application. There are some who will hold on here a

ittle longer; but after they have acknowledged that the twenty-fourth chapter refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, they find themselves utterly puzzled, when they attempt to run their finger down the page, and point out the place where the Saviour finished speaking of this world, and commenced to speak of another. Now, my friends, I bring forward the question again. Who have been the authors of this change? When Universalists survey the history of their denomination for fifty years, and see the success which has crowned their efforts, they feel encouraged to persevere. They wish to restore the blessed doctrine of Jesus Christ in its primitive purity. It has been buried beneath the corruptions that have crept into the church. The views of the heathen have been set up in christian temples. The Jews were not more anxious to restore the holy vessels, than we are to bring again into notice the peculiar doctrines of Jesus, and establish them in christian assemblies. This is the cause of all our zeal. For this we erect temples—for this we dedicate them—for this we labor to establish the ministry. For this we trust this house has been erected, and for this it is now dedicated. This pulpit is dedicated to the proclamation of the universal love of God, manifested through Jesus Christ, and to the preaching of that gospel which is 'g ad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.'

I congratulate you, my brethren, the proprietors of this house, for the success which has crowned your endeavors. On the sixth day of the next month it will be three years since the first sermon on Universal Salvation was preached in yonder hall. My most sanguine expectations are more than realized. I rejoice with you— I do most heartily rejoice in the consummation of your wishes. My dear brethren, continue to be united, and nothing can impede your growth. May God soon send you a "pastor after his own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge

and understanding." When you have meetings, do not absent yourselves from this house unnecessarily. Prize truth, brethren, above all things else. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Fill up the measure of your days virtuously, and "let your light so shine before men, that others may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." And when the dust of this edifice shall be scattered by the four winds, may successive altars be reared, and here may successive generations "build the house that was builded these many years ago."

"*Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. Arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.*" AMEN.

NOTE.

(1) The doctrine of the ultimate happiness of all mankind, is unquestionably involved in the scriptures here quoted. For, first, it is asserted that all mankind are given to Christ. "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." John iii. 35. The phrase "all things" will, without doubt, be understood to mean, as Archbishop Newcome explains it, "all intelligent beings." This explanation agrees with Psalms ii. 8. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Second. Jesus declared, "all that the Father giveth me *shall come to me.*" John vi. 37. Hence he invited all. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." John xii. 32. Third. The Saviour asserted, that those who shall come to him, "shall in no wise be cast out." The inference from the three propositions is unavoidable. All men will be blessed in Christ; and he will fully verify the declaration of the Psalmist, that "men shall be blessed in him, and all nations shall call him blessed." He explicitly asserted, that he came not to condemn the world, but to save it—to seek and to save that which was lost. He most affectionately entreated mankind to put their confidence in God, and not take anxious thought about the future. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." He inquired why they should be fearful, since God had given them the greater blessings of their life and their bodies, that he would withhold the lesser benefits of food and raiment. And the question may be well predicated on the Saviour's reasoning in this instance, since God has promised us *immortality*, why should we doubt that he will crown that immortality with happiness? Jesus proved himself to be "the Saviour of the world." Such the Samaritans judged him to be, from listening to his communications, and such the beloved John absolutely declared that he was. Paul also testified, that in his name, "every knee should bow, of *things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,* (a periphrasis for "*the universe*" according to Prof. Stuart) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

DEDICATION.

The services, at the dedication of the UNIVERSALIST MEETING HOUSE in the South Parish of Dedham, Mass. were performed on January 14th, 1830, in the following order:

1. Anthem. "*I was glad,*" *&c.*

2. Reading select Scriptures. REV. HOSEA BALLOU 2d.

3. Introductory Prayer. REV. SEBASTIAN STREETER.

4. Hymn.

5. Dedicatory Prayer. REV. HOSEA BALLOU.

6. Hymn.

7. Sermon. REV. THOMAS WHITTEMORE.

8. Anthem. "*Glory be to God on High.*"

9. Concluding Prayer. REV. JACOB FRIEZE.

10. The Chorus, "*Lord dismiss us,*" *&c.*

11. Benediction.

These services were performed in the presence of a congregation who filled the house in every part, and who evinced by their attention the deep interest they felt in the exercises.